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60446-251; 03ZFM014/018

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 have been cancelled and claim 17 is withdrawn. Claims 14-16, and 18-21 remain under consideration and new claims 22-28 have been added.

Claims 14-16, and 18-21 were rejected as being anticipated by Genise (U.S. 6,502,476). Genise disclose a centrifugal clutch assembly and method of controlling the clutch assembly during potentially overheating conditions. Claim 1 requires the step of disengaging transmission of torque by opening the centrifugal clutch assembly responsive to a detected fault condition. Genise does not disclose or suggest this limitation. The Genise method causes an increase in engine speed to cause full engagement of the centrifugal clutch. Alternatively, Genise discloses a quick release mechanism such as a known friction clutch device that is disengaged to prevent overheating of the centrifugal clutch. (Col 9, lines 15-38). Genise does not disclose or suggest opening the centrifugal clutch assembly as is required by claim 1. Instead, Genise utilizes an increase in engine speed to either fully engage the clutch or a separate mechanism to disengage the transmission of torque.

Further, claim 16 requires that the centrifugal clutch assembly include a plurality of weights movable radially outward responsive to rotation to begin actuation and overriding the plurality of weights to open the centrifugal clutch assembly. Genise does not disclose this limitation.

Applicant has included new claims 22 and 23 that depend ultimately from claim 14. Claim 22 requires the step of moving a front pressure plate toward a disengaged position independent of a radial position of the plurality of weights. Claim 23 requires the step of engaging a sleeve to a front pressure plate and moving the front pressure plate from an engaged position to disengaged position.

Genise does not disclose a sleeve, and does not disclose the step of moving a front pressure plate away from an engaged position with a sleeve.

New claim 24 requires the step of overriding engagement of a pressure plate and friction plate at a speed greater than or equal to a desired speed by moving the pressure plate away from the engaged position, where the desired speed is the speed at which radial movement of the centrifugal weights cause movement of a pressure plate axially toward an engaged position. Claim 25 depends from claim 24 and further requires the step of monitoring a vehicle input with respect to a vehicle output and overriding engagement between the pressure plate and the friction plate responsive to

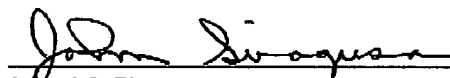
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the vehicle output being outside a desired range. Claim 26 requires overriding engagement to prevent an engine from stalling. Claim 27 requires moving the pressure plate axially with a sleeve movable axially along an axis of rotation. Claim 28, requires moving the pressure plate axially toward an engaged position at a speed below the desired speed such that the pressure plate engages the friction disk to transmit torque at a speed below the speed that causes actuation by radial movement of the plurality of weights. The prior art does not disclose or suggest moving a pressure plate in centrifugal clutch to override engagement caused by centrifugal weights.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Applicant believes that no additional fees are necessary, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

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